**Pursuing the Developmental Aims of the Triarchic Model of Psychopathy: Creation and Validation of Triarchic Scales for Use in the USC-RFAB Longitudinal Twin Project**

***Supplemental Material***

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**Supplemental Introductory Information:**

**Triarchic Model of Psychopathy: Links to Prior Literatures, Aims/Purposes, & Points of Criticism**

**Linkages to Prior Existing Literatures**

The triarchic model was introduced by Patrick, Fowles, & Krueger in a 2009 review article published in *Development and Psychopathology*. The article began by reviewing historical writings on psychopathy, including published works from the 1800s and early 1900s by scholars such as Pinel, Rush, Kraepelin, Partridge, and Schneider, and influential works from the mid-1900 by authorities including Cleckley, Lindner, McCord and McCord, Craft, and Robins (for citations/summaries, see Patrick et al., 2009). This initial section of the review highlighted clinical features of psychopathy highlighted by scholars concerned with its presentation in psychiatric patients, and others describing its presentation in criminal offenders — noting an emphasis in the former writings on charm, likeability, persuasiveness, and lack of anxiousness or internalizing symptoms, and in the latter on features of callousness, viciousness, and predatory exploitativeness.

The second major section of the 2009 paper focused on empirical research on psychopathy and various measures developed to assess it. Findings were considered from research with adult offenders using the interview-based Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003), with primary attention devoted to correlates of its two broad factors and narrower symptom facets — interpersonal, affective, impulsive-irresponsible, antisocial — in particular, the first three of these, considered to reflect more trait-dispositional aspects of psychopathy (e.g., Cooke & Michie, 2001). Also considered were findings from counterpart research using interview- or informant-rating measures adapted from or patterned after the PCL-R to investigate the nature and correlates of psychopathy and its facets in adjudicated or clinic-referred youth — including studies using the PCL Youth Version, Antisocial Process Screening Device (APSD), and the Child Psychopathy Scale (CPS). Additionally, this section of the 2009 paper reviewed findings from research using self-report based measures (e.g., Psychopathic Personality Inventory [PPI], Youth Psychopathic Traits Inventory [YPI]) to investigate psychopathic proclivities and their correlates in non-delinquent youth and adult non-offenders (e.g., community men and women, college students). (For relevant citations/summaries, see Patrick et al., 2009.)

The foregoing sections of the 2009 triarchic model paper sought to highlight major conceptual themes evident across these various existing literatures. The third major section of the paper introduced the three constructs of the triarchic model — boldness, meanness, and disinhibition — with specific reference to these prior existing literatures. The triarchic constructs were identified as “prominent recurring themes… [in] historic and contemporary efforts to conceptualize the syndrome of psychopathy” that can be viewed as distinct dispositions based on “the broader personality, psychopathology, and neurobiological literatures” (Patrick et al., 2009, p. 925). This section of the paper discussed how these constructs are represented to varying degrees in alternative historic descriptions of psychopathy and measures for assessing it — with boldness and disinhibition emphasized to a greater degree in writings on psychopathy in psychiatric and community samples (e.g., Cleckley, 1976; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) and meanness and disinhibition emphasized more in writings on psychopathy in adult/adolescent offender samples and clinic-referred youth (e.g., McCord & McCord, 1946; Frick & Hare, 2001). It also discussed how these constructs can be conceptualized in biobehavioral terms (i.e., in relation to neural systems/processes pertinent to mobilization, guidance, and control of action).

The final major section of the 2009 paper focused on how core concepts from the broader developmental psychopathology literature — including principles of equifinality and multifinality (Cicchetti & Rogosh, 1996), early dispositional constructs of difficult temperament and low fear, and problem-promoting processes of failed attachment and coercive exchanges (see Patrick et al., 2009, for additional citations and descriptive details) — can be applied to an etiologic understanding of the distinct dispositional facets of psychopathy identified by the triarchic model.

**Aims/Purposes of the Triarchic Model**

The triarchic model was formulated as a *construct-based* model, to provide a framework for reconciling alternative historic conceptualizations of psychopathy and integrating findings across studies using different assessment inventories. As outlined on the preceding section, it drew on major existing bodies of theory and research in the psychopathy area as a whole, and was intended to accommodate alternative perspectives and measurement approaches rather than supplant them. Other objectives of the model were to: (1) allow for model-based integration of findings across different studies; (2) facilitate the linking of research on psychopathy in youth with studies of adults, through use of constructs with clear referents in the developmental literature; (3) allow for clinical features of psychopathy to be linked more effectively to non-report based measures, through a focus on constructs framed in biobehavioral terms; and (4) provide a means to interface research on psychopathy with the broader psychopathology literature, through a focus on transdiagnostic constructs.

A major impetus for advancing the triarchic model was a serious dispute that arose between prominent psychopathy researchers during 2007, regarding an article published subsequently in *Psychological Assessment* (Skeem & Cooke, 2010). This dispute (for details, see Poythress & Petrila, 2011) spotlighted two longstanding sources of conflict among investigators in this area — namely, differing opinions regarding the nature of psychopathy (i.e., what features/attributes it encompasses), and a failure to distinguish between theoretical constructs and manifest measures. The triarchic model addresses persisting disagreements about the nature of psychopathy by recognizing that different conceptualizations of psychopathy emphasize constructs of boldness, meanness, and disinhibition to differing degrees. The model addresses the issue of constructs versus measures by focusing on dispositional constructs not bound to any particular measure, and encouraging the development of alternative approaches to operationalizing these constructs — not only through use of different self-report or clinician/informant rating scales, but also through use of physiological and behavioral performance measures (see Patrick & Drislane, 2015). From this standpoint, the constructs of the triarchic model represent “open” constructs — i.e., theoretical concepts subject to refinement based on data of various types.

Because the constructs of the triarchic model are not tied to any specific assessment instrument, they can be operationalized in conventional domains of self-report or clinician/informant ratings using construct-relevant items from different available inventories. The first and to date most widely used measure of the triarchic trait constructs is the self-report based Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM; Patrick, 2010). However, a number of other scale sets have been developed for assessing the triarchic traits, some using items from individual inventories of psychopathy (e.g., PPI, YPI) or personality/personality pathology (e.g., NEO Personality Inventory-Revised, Multidimensional Personality Inventory, Personality Inventory for DSM-5), and others drawing on items from more than one assessment measure (e.g., Brislin et al., 2019) — as was done in the current study. (For relevant citations/details, see: Patrick & Drislane, 2015; Sellbom 2018).

The ability to operationalize the triarchic model traits in different ways is important for a number of reasons. It helps keep clear the distinction between psychopathy as a construct and psychopathy as a measured entity. It permits the triarchic constructs to be operationalized in already-existing specialized datasets, such as the USC-RFAB longitudinal-twin dataset, that can help to advance our understanding of psychopathy in novel ways. In addition, the availability of different scale measures of the triarchic trait constructs allows for these constructs to be modeled as latent variables (see Drislane & Patrick, 2017). Latent variable representations of the triarchic traits can be used to evaluate new scale measures of these traits, in terms of their fit with the model. They can also serve as referents for evaluating the relative coverage of boldness, meanness, and disinhibition in different psychopathy inventories, and integrating findings across studies using different inventories.

**Criticisms of the Model**

Some points of criticism have been raised regarding the triarchic model. One of the main ones is whether boldness should be considered a part of psychopathy, because it includes adaptive qualities (e.g., emotional stability, social adeptness) and correlates only weakly with antisocial behavior (e.g., Sleep, Weiss, Lynam, & Miller, 2019). The triarchic model includes boldness as a trait facet because this attribute is clearly evident in influential historic accounts of psychopathy (e.g., Cleckley’s; see Crego & Widiger, 2016) and because it is represented in many assessment instruments for psychopathy — including the PCL-R, the PPI, and the YPI (see Patrick & Drislane, 2015). However, the model acknowledges that boldness may be less “central” to some expressions of psychopathy than others (e.g., “secondary” as compared to “primary,” criminal as compared to “successful”).

Other criticisms have focused on the TriPM operationalization of the triarchic model constructs. Roy et al. (2020) argued on the basis of item-level factor analyses that the subscales of the TriPM assess more than three dimensions (i.e., seven in total) and thus do not effectively assess the triarchic model constructs. However, the TriPM’s three scales were developed to index broad rather than narrow factors, and though some diversity of items was required to ensure effective content coverage, a dominant factor is clearly evident within each scale (Patrick et al., in press). Additionally, speaking to their validity, scale-level factor analytic work has demonstrated strong convergence of the TriPM scales with other scales developed to measure the triarchic model traits (Drislane & Patrick, 2017). That being said, it is important to reiterate that manifest scale measures are only approximations of theoretical constructs.

**Supplemental Method A:**

**Detailed Description of Procedural Steps for Developing the RFAB-Triarchic Scales**

Scale construction occurred in two steps: (1) initial selection of candidate items for each scale, followed by (2) refinement of these initial scale item sets. This process has been used in several previous triarchic scale development efforts (e.g., Brislin et al., 2015, 2019; Drislane et al., 2015, 2018, 2019; Hall et al., 2014; Sellbom et al., 2016).

**Candidate Item Selection**

Four evaluators, a PhD-level psychologist and three clinical psychology graduate students, independently rated each of the items of the Child Psychopathy Scale (CPS; Lynam, 1997) and the Youth Self-Report (YSR; Achenbach, 1991) questionnaires — 162 items in all — for how closely they reflected each of the triarchic constructs. The evaluators were provided with narrative descriptions of the constructs, based on the original description of the triarchic model (Patrick, Fowles, & Krueger, 2009).[[1]](#footnote-1) Evaluators completed their ratings of each item through an online survey system without knowledge of the questionnaire it was from (CPS, YSR) or its subscale assignment. Each evaluator indicated the degree to which each item related to each construct of the triarchic model in turn by selecting one of five response options: unrelated to the trait, strongly represents high levels of the trait, somewhat represents high levels of the trait, somewhat represents low levels of the trait, and strongly represents low levels of the trait. All 162 items were rated for each construct (boldness, meanness, and disinhibition) separately, such that each item was rated a total of three times by each rater.

Items were then evaluated for level of agreement across raters to identify items deemed to be the most relevant for each of the triarchic constructs. Items that were rated as being strongly representative of either high or low levels of a construct by at least 3 of the 4 raters were selected as candidate items for each scale. The initial number of candidate items was 14 for Boldness, 22 for Meanness, and 19 for Disinhibition.

**Scale Refinement**

Criteria considered in the process of item-set (scale) refinement included item-total correlations of items within scales and their cross-correlations with candidate items in the other provisional scales. Items were dropped from scales if they demonstrated weak convergence with other candidate items within a scale such that their deletion increased internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha). Additionally, to identify item sets that indexed the triarchic model traits in a maximally distinctive way, items that increased correlations with other target scales were also removed. During this stage, 5 items were removed from Boldness, 14 from Meanness, and 10 from Disinhibition. Following the removal of these initial candidate items, other available items exhibiting lower but at least moderate consensus across raters were evaluated for potential inclusion in the RFAB-Tri scales. These items were assessed for correlations with target scales and internal properties when included as scale indicators, and were retained only if they improved internal consistency of the target scale without inflating the scale’s correlation with the other provisional Tri scales. These procedures were applied iteratively, with effects of adding or removing items evaluated step-by-step, and priority for retention given to items that improved content coverage and item-polarity balance (i.e., similar representation of positively- and negatively-worded items) for a particular scale. Altogether, 1 alternative item was added to the Boldness scale, 2 to the Meanness scale, and 3 to the Disinhibition scale.

The final RFAB-Tri scales consist of 10 Boldness items (6 reverse-keyed), 10 Meanness items (4 reverse-keyed), and 12 Disinhibition items (4 reverse-keyed). See Supplemental Table A for further information about the scales and items.

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| Supplemental Table A. Items from the CPS and YSR/ASR Included in the Final Self-Report RFAB-  Triarchic Scales | | | | | | |
| **RFAB-Boldness** (10 items)  Wave 3 α = .66; Wave 5 α = .72 | | | | | | |
| CPS Item |  | Item Category |  | Paraphrased Item Content | | |
| 7 (–) |  | Fearless |  | Avoids frightening things/situations | | |
| 28 |  | Fearless |  | Enjoys risky activities | | |
| 35 |  | Assertive/Persuasive |  | Talks a lot | | |
| 44 (–) |  | Assertive/Persuasive |  | Views self as shy | | |
| 46 |  | Assertive/Persuasive |  | Able to talk self out of trouble | | |
| 47 |  | Calm/Confident |  | Is self-confident | | |
| YSR/ASR Item |  |  |  |  | | |
| 45 (–) |  | Calm/Confident |  | Is high strung | | |
| 50 (–) |  | Fearless |  | Is overly fearful | | |
| 71 (–) |  | Calm/Confident |  | Becomes embarrassed easily | | |
| 75 (–) |  | Assertive/Persuasive |  | Views self as shy | | |
| **RFAB-Meanness** (10 items)  Wave 3 α = .69; Wave 5 α = .68 | | | | | | |
| CPS Item |  | Item Category |  | Paraphrased Item Content | | |
| 1 (–) |  | Kind vs. Cruel |  | Views self as caring/affectionate | | |
| 16 |  | Callous-Aggressive |  | Exploits others | | |
| 18 (–) |  | Kind vs. Cruel |  | Views self as considerate | | |
| 21 |  | Kind vs. Cruel |  | Is unkind to others | | |
| 27 (–) |  | Remorseful |  | Feels remorseful about wrongful acts | | |
| 33 |  | Callous-Aggressive |  | Bullies others | | |
| 37 (–) |  | Remorseful |  | Feels upset after behaving badly | | |
| YSR/ASR Item |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 |  | Kind vs. Cruel |  | Antagonistic toward others | | |
| 21 |  | Callous-Aggressive |  | Damages others’ possessions | | |
| 97 |  | Callous-Aggressive |  | Makes threats against others | | |
| **RFAB-Disinhibition** (12 items)  Wave 3 α = .72; Wave 5 α = .72 | | | | | | |
| CPS Item |  | Item Category |  | Paraphrased Item Content | | |
| 12 |  | Impatient |  | Is prone to boredom | | |
| 20 (–) |  | Impatient |  | Persists with tasks | | |
| 23 (–) |  | Impulsive |  | Thinks before speaking or acting | | |
| 24 |  | Impatient |  | Has difficulty waiting for desired outcomes | | |
| 26 (–) |  | Impulsive |  | Is planful | | |
| 39 |  | Irritable |  | Becomes angered easily | | |
| 41 (–) |  | Impulsive |  | Is goal-oriented | | |
| 43 |  | Irritable |  | Feels wrongly accused | | |
| 49 |  | Impatient |  | Experiences a need for stimulation | | |
| YSR/ASR Item |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  | Irritable |  | Is argumentative | | |
| 41 |  | Impulsive |  | Acts without considering consequences | | |
| 95 |  | Irritable |  | Views self as quick tempered | | |

*Note*: CPS = Child Psychopathy Scale (Lynam, 1997); YSR = Youth Self-Report questionnaire (Achenbach, 1991; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001); ASR = Adult Self-Report questionnaire (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2003); (–) = reverse-scored.

**Supplemental Method B:**

**Detailed Description of Computation of YSR/ASR Internalizing and Externalizing Composites**

As noted in the main text, participants in the RFAB study completed the Youth Self-Report (YSR; Achenbach, 1991) questionnaire at Wave 3 of the study, and its counterpart, the Adult Self-Report (ASR; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2003) questionnaire, at Wave 5. At Wave 3, the YSR Internalizing composite was created by summing scores for items from subscales tapping Anxious-Depressed, Withdrawn-Depressed, and Somatic Complaint symptoms, and the Externalizing composite was created by summing scores for items indexing Rule-Breaking and Aggressive Behavior (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). The Wave 5 ASR composites were highly similar, but consistent with the ASR manual, (1) specific items included in the subscales, and thus the composites, differed from those included in the YSR subscales; (2) an Intrusive Behavior subscale was added to the Externalizing composite; and (3) the Withdrawn-Depressed subscale was renamed Withdrawn. For purposes of the current analyses, to avoid criterion contamination, four items were excluded from the Wave 3 YSR Internalizing and five from the Externalizing composite due to their inclusion in the RFAB-Tri scales. At Wave 5, three and five items were dropped from the ASR Internalizing and Externalizing composites, respectively, for the same reason.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Of note, the 1991 version of the YSR (Achenbach, 1991) was administered at Wave 3 rather than the current 2001 version (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001),. Achenbach & Rescorla (2001) recommend calculating subscales for archival data of this sort according to the 2001 factor structure, treating any inconsistent items across the two versions as missing. Compared with the 1991 version, the 2001 YSR added 1 item and 3 items to the 1991 Internalizing and Externalizing composites, respectively, and these items are thus treated as missing in calculation of 2001 scale scores from 1991 data. Apart from this, items included in the 1991 and 2001 YSR Internalizing and Externalizing composites are identical.

After (1) removing items included in RFAB-Tri scales and (2) omitting items missing from the 1991 YSR, the Wave 3 YSR Internalizing and Externalizing composites (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) used in the current study consisted of 26/31 and 24/32 items, respectively. Specifically, the resulting Wave 3 YSR Internalizing composite comprised 5 items pertaining to excessive anxiety, 7 to depressive symptoms, 3 to social withdrawal, and 11 to physical/somatic complaints; the Wave 3 YSR Externalizing composite comprised 4 items pertaining to deviant social behavior, 9 to disrespectful or disobedient behavior, 3 to emotion dysregulation, 3 to intrusive behavior, 3 to physical or verbal aggression, and 2 to property destruction. At Wave 5, removal of ASR items included in the RFAB-Tri scales resulted in ASR Internalizing and Externalizing composites consisting of 36/39 and 30/35 items, respectively (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2003). Specifically, the Wave 5 ASR Internalizing composite comprised 4 items pertaining to excessive anxiety, 9 to depressive symptoms, 11 to social withdrawal or problems, and 12 to physical/somatic complaints, and the Wave 5 ASR Externalizing comprised 4 items pertaining to deviant social behavior, 4 to disrespectful or disobedient behavior, 4 to emotion dysregulation, 7 to intrusive behavior, 7 to violations of laws or rules, 3 to physical or verbal aggression, and 1 to property destruction. See Supplemental Table B for details regarding the items excluded from the composites when compared with the YSR and ASR manuals (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001, 2003).

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| Supplemental Table B. Items Excluded from the YSR/ASR Internalizing and Externalizing Composites | | | | | | | | |
| Wave 3 YSR | | | | | | | | |
| Item |  | Content |  | YSR Subscale |  | YSR Composite |  | Reason for Exclusion |
| 2 |  | Substance Use |  | Rule Breaking |  | Externalizing |  | Missing |
| 3 |  | Disrespectful |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Dis |
| 5 |  | Depression |  | Withdrawn-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | Missing |
| 16 |  | Aggression |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Mean |
| 21 |  | Property Destruction |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Mean |
| 28 |  | Disrespectful |  | Rule Breaking |  | Externalizing |  | Missing |
| 45 |  | Anxiety |  | Anxious-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 50 |  | Anxiety |  | Anxious-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 71 |  | Anxiety |  | Anxious-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 75 |  | Anxiety |  | Withdrawn-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 95 |  | Emotion Dysregulation |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Dis |
| 97 |  | Aggression |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Mean |
| 99 |  | Substance Use |  | Rule Breaking |  | Externalizing |  | Missing |
| Wave 5 ASR | | | | | | | | |
| Item |  | Content |  | ASR Subscale |  | ASR Composite |  | Reason for Exclusion |
| 3 |  | Disrespectful |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Dis |
| 16 |  | Aggression |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Mean |
| 41 |  | Impulsive Behavior |  | Rule Breaking |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Dis |
| 45 |  | Anxiety |  | Anxious-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 50 |  | Anxiety |  | Anxious-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 71 |  | Anxiety |  | Anxious-Depressed |  | Internalizing |  | RFAB-Bold |
| 95 |  | Emotion Dysregulation |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Dis |
| 97 |  | Aggression |  | Aggressive Behavior |  | Externalizing |  | RFAB-Mean |

*Note*: YSR = Youth Self-Report questionnaire (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001); ASR = Adult Self-Report questionnaire (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2003). “Missing” indicates the item was not included in computation of the composite (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) because it was not part of the version of the questionnaire used for data collection (Achenbach, 1991). “RFAB-Bold,” “-Mean,” and “-Dis” indicate the item was excluded from the relevant composite to avoid criterion contamination, as it is a part of the RFAB-Triarchic Boldness, Meanness, or Disinhibition scale, respectively.

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1. The Construct Definition Form can be found in the online supplement to Hall et al. (2014). http://supp.apa.org/psycarticles/supplemental/a0035665/a0035665\_supp.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Although the RFAB-Tri scales include the same 10 items from the YSR and ASR, one YSR item (#41, in the Wave 3 Disinhibition scale) and two ASR items (#21 and #75 – included in the Wave 5 Meanness and Boldness scales, respectively) were from subscales not represented in the Internalizing and Externalizing composites for their respective measures (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001, 2003) and thus did not need to be excluded from the measure-specific composites used in the reported analyses. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)